

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) joined her House colleagues today in passing H.R. 2920, the Statutory Pay-As-You-Go Act 2009 by a vote of 265-166. This tough pay-as-you-go law would require the government to offset changes in mandatory spending with either an increase in revenue or a spending cut somewhere else, to prevent runaway increases in the federal deficit.

“As we move beyond the economic crisis, we must get mandatory spending programs under control to avoid burdening future generations with government debt,” Bean said. “The discipline and enforcement of statutory PAYGO has proven successful in the past and is needed again to reduce the runaway deficits we’ve inherited.”

H.R. 2920 requires that any new tax cut or mandatory spending program be paid for. The Office of Management and Budget, using budget estimates from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, would maintain a PAYGO ledger that records the average five-year and ten-year budgetary effects of all legislation enacted through 2013 that affects governmental receipts or mandatory outlays relative to the baseline.

If there is a PAYGO cost at the end of a particular year because Congress has not succeeded in paying for all the new costs that it has enacted, the President would be required to issue an order sequestering budgetary resources from certain mandatory programs.

Congresswoman Bean joined President Obama to announce the introduction of Statutory PAYGO earlier this year and has worked to increase fiscal responsibility and government accountability since coming to Congress. She supported statutory PAYGO in previous years, but the measure was not supported by the previous Administration. She was a strong advocate of restoring internal PAYGO rules to Congress, which Congress enacted in 2007. Today’s PAYGO law supplements these rules by providing an enforcement mechanism, sequestration, that is not otherwise available.

Earlier this year, Bean cosponsored the successful H.Res. 40 audit bill, that required each House committee to conduct regular hearings into waste, fraud and abuse of federal agencies and required increased scrutiny if problems are spotted during a fiscal audit or by the Government Accountability Office.

Bean's Congressional Accountability Initiative for 2009 would increase legislative transparency and chart common-sense fiscal solutions through two bills. Bean authored H.Res. 287, the Voting Record Transparency Resolution, to require members of Congress to post their voting records on their taxpayer-funded websites. Bean joined author Rep. Jim Cooper (TN-05) to introduce H.R. 1557, the Securing America's Future Economy (SAFE) Commission Act, to establish an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate reforms to our nation's entitlement programs and federal budgeting process and make binding recommendations.